DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 410 591 CS 215 974

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TITLE Rethinking Language Arts: Passion and Practice. Critical Education Practice Series Volume 9.
ISBN ISBN-0-8153-2322-0
PUB DATE 1997-00-00
NOTE 198p.
AVAILABLE FROM Garland Publishing, Inc., 1000A Sherman Avenue, Hamden, CT 06514 (hardcover: ISBN-0-8153-1958-4; paperback: ISBN-0-8153-2322-0, $18.95).
PUB TYPE Books (010) -- Guides - Classroom - Teacher (052)
EDRS PRICE Document Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS *Classroom Environment; Classroom Techniques; Critical Theory; Critical Thinking; Drama; Elementary Education; Grouping (Instructional Purposes); *Language Arts; Poetry; Reflective Teaching; *Student Evaluation; *Teacher Role; Teacher Student Relationship; Writing Instruction
IDENTIFIERS *Authentic Assessment; *Critical Pedagogy

ABSTRACT

Based on experience with non-native English speaking students, this book connects classroom practice to critical theory and provides a clear vision of alternative classroom environments in action. In the form of letters from a teacher-educator to her students, the book urges teachers to review and reevaluate their classroom practices to create an accommodating and positive environment for all children. The book explores and explains such teacher roles as decision maker, reflective thinker, political being, and social change agent. It stresses the importance of understanding educational philosophy and theory--the underpinnings that enable teachers to create classrooms, curricula, and schools that meet students' needs. "Letters" in the book are: (1) Introduction; (2) The Reflective Educator: Rethinking the Teacher as Practitioner; (3) Teaching within Community: Rethinking Blocked Schedules; (4) Broadening Our Definitions: Rethinking What We Say about Our Children and Their Learning; (5) Children as Authors in a Writer's Workshop: Rethinking "My Summer Vacation"; (6) Teaching as Human Community: Rethinking the Bluebirds, Robins, and Buzzards; (7) Allowing Students to Think: Rethinking "Teaching Students What to Think"; (8) Playwrights in Action: Rethinking Poetry and Drama in the Classroom; (9) Authentic Evaluation: Rethinking the Friday Spelling Tests; (10) The Nature of Instruction: Rethinking Objectives, Procedures, and Evaluation; (11) Classroom Interactions: Rethinking Classroom Management; (12) But Where's Your Desk? Rethinking Classroom Design; (13) For Now, Farewell: Rethinking Getting the Children Ready for Next Year; and (14) P.S.: Some Last Thoughts. Contains 20 references. (RS)

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